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R 211218Z FEB 08
FM AMEMBASSY CHISINAU
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6296
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS CHISINAU 000172

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STATE FOR EUR/UMB

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MOLDOVA FACES KOSOVO DILEMMA OVER TRANSNISTRIA ANALOGY:
PRESIDENT REJECTS RECOGNITION

Sensitive But Unclassified. Please Protect Accordingly.

1. (SBU) Summary: The Government of Moldova (GOM) and all major parties reacted to Kosovo's proclamation of independence with concerns that the analogy of Kosovo might be applied to Transnistria. Tiraspol authorities gladly accepted Kosovo's independence and said it should be a precedent for the eventual recognition of their own independence. Though the GOM's initial public statement February 18 left open the possibility of an eventual recognition decision, on February 20 President Voronin shut that door, saying that Moldova would not recognize Kosovo. End summary.

GOM: President Voronin Rejects Kosovo Recognition

2. (SBU) The GOM initially issued a press statement February 18 which expressed concerns about Kosovo's declaration of independence, but did not unequivocally refuse to recognize it. However, on February 20 President Voronin told the media that Moldova will not recognize Kosovo. He rejected the notion of states being created on an ethnic principle. In its first statements, the GOM defended its own interests against Transnistrian independence with an appeal to international law and territorial integrity, while avoiding direct opposition to U.S. and most EU member-states' support for Kosovo independence. At the same time, the GOM expressed its concern that Kosovo could stimulate separatists all over the world.

MD Politicians: Pluralism in Action

3. (SBU) Moldovan political parties responded disparately to the issue, and ignored the GOM's stance. The Social-Democrats led by Eduard Musuc issued an anti-independence clone of the Russian MFA Statement on Kosovo. The Our Moldova Alliance (AMN) spoke only about the lack of similarities between Transnistria and Kosovo. Rejecting Kosovo as a precedent for Transnistrian independence, Christian Democrat leader Iurie Rosca appealed to national unity, recalled Transnistrian settlement framework documents adopted by the Parliament in the summer of 2005, and warned against reaching any excessively quick solution which could be fatal for Moldova's independence, sovereignty and prospects for European integration. The People's Republican Party, known for its pro-Russian positions, stated that Kosovo's self-proclaimed independence precludes any solution of the Transnistria conflict within the existing Moldovan constitution, while other leftist parties demanded that the issue be addressed immediately by the Supreme Security Council. The generally pro-Romanian liberal parties made no comments on Kosovo.

Optimistic in Tiraspol

14. (SBU) Reactions from the Tiraspol "government," were positive, arguing that Transnistria had an even stronger historical and legal claim to independence than Kosovo. Supreme Soviet Speaker Shevchuk suggested that Kosovo is a precedent for settling frozen conflicts based on the people's will and their right to self-determination. Thus, he stated, only a referendum can provide a viable solution. Taking a harder line, Transnistrian "Foreign Minister" Litskai stated that Transnistria had already developed its own action plan which would be implemented when Kosovo declared independence; his remarks echoed a similar statement made by Russian President Putin at his recent annual press conference.

Comment: The Moldovan Dilemma

15. (SBU) Comment: Moldova is pressed from two sides. Though initially it appeared the GOM would refrain from making definitive statements, President Voronin has now come out strongly against recognition. While Moldova is unlikely to change its opposition to Kosovo's independence in the short run, it is possible that its official view may become more tempered. In particular, Moldova may slowly become convinced that its interests will best be preserved by accepting the USG view of the non-precedential nature of Kosovo's independence. Once again, Christian Democrat leader Rosca, seems to have used the situation at hand to adopt a posture offering strategic electoral advantage to his own party. End Comment.

Kirby